

MINUTES

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TASK FORCE

Tuesday, December 22, 2009, 2:00 PM
Council Chambers, Municipal Building
93 Cottage Street
Bar Harbor, Maine

I. Call to Order

Members present: Patricia Samuel, Chair; Barry Teater, Secretary; Mark Hanscome; Chris Fogg; John Kelly; James “Howdy” Houghton; Matt Horton; Chris Vincenty

Staff present: Anne Krieg, Town Planning Director

II. Absences

Excused absences: Karen Baksa

Unexcused absences: Randy Sprague

III. Minutes

Mr. Horton moved to accept the minutes of the December 8, 2009, meeting without any changes, and Mr. Houghton seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

IV. Regular Business

A. Completion of Downtown development district project

Extensive discussion focused on the proposed affordable-housing requirement for four-story buildings in the Downtown Village I district. Mr. Horton said the requirement was “extortionary” and would stifle economic development by constricting developers’ use of their property. As a compromise, however, he suggested giving developers of four-story buildings the flexibility to contribute to affordable housing off site, in lieu of providing such housing on site.

Mr. Teater expressed concern that the proposed policy was merging two issues that should be unrelated – commercial building heights and affordable housing. Ideally, he said, the town should have the

conviction to set and enforce a building height limit and not compromise it with affordable-housing concessions by developers.

Mr. Hanscome said he opposed four-story buildings altogether, irrespective of affordable housing provisions, because Bar Harbor “should be a three-story town.” He also expressed concern that financial contributions by developers for off-site affordable housing could be difficult for the town to manage.

Mr. Houghton said the policy should be written to ensure a net gain of year-round affordable housing – either through construction of new units or the conversion of existing weekly or seasonal rental units to year-round use – and not allow a developer merely to acquire affordable housing units already in existence.

Mr. Horton moved to recommend that four-story buildings of up to 45 feet tall should be allowed and that developers of these buildings should be given options to contribute to affordable housing off site, such as paying into an affordable housing fund, providing affordable housing units, or providing rent subsidies. Mr. Kelly seconded the motion. The motion passed by a 5 to 2 vote, with Mr. Horton, Mr. Teater, Mr. Kelly, Mr. Fogg and Ms. Samuel voting in favor and Mr. Hanscome and Mr. Houghton voting against. Mr. Vincenty abstained because he missed most of the deliberation on this issue.

B. Update of Eden Street Corridor Zoning Project

This item was tabled.

C. Update of Route 3 committee

Mr. Horton and Ms. Krieg reported that they and the rest of the Route 3 committee had a productive meeting in Augusta on December 22 with seven members of the Maine Department of Transportation and state representatives Dennis Damon and Elsie Fleming. The committee gained feedback on a needs and purpose document describing the Route 3 upgrades being requested. The next steps are to revise the document and present it to staff of the state’s Congressional delegation in January, and to organize a local public hearing on the project, Mr. Horton said.

D. Review of a memo to Town Council about Code Enforcement complaints

This item was tabled.

E. Council check-in on December 16

This item was tabled.

V. Public Comment

There were no public comments.

VI. Matters for Next Meetings

A. Set 2010 meeting calendar

The Task Force agreed to meet twice monthly in 2010, on the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month, except for June, July, August and September. In each of those four months, members agreed to meet only once, on June 15, July 13, August 10 and September 14.

B. Request Town Council extend Task Force work

This item was tabled.

VII. Confirm Date/Time/Location for Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Task Force was confirmed for 2 p.m. on January 12 in the Council Chambers of the Municipal Building.

VIII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:30 p.m. by acclamation of the Chair.

These minutes were prepared by Task Force Secretary Barry Teater for presentation at the January 12, 2010, meeting of the Economic Development Task Force.

Barry Teater, Secretary

Date